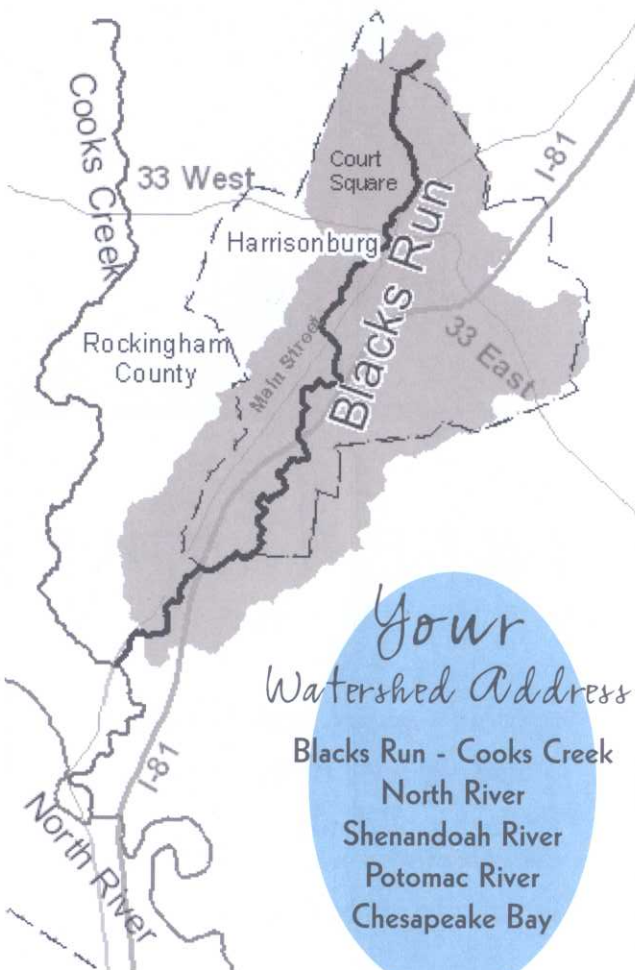


# Easy Ways to Contribute to the Health of Your Watershed

- Plant native trees and shrubs
- Be a pet pooper-scooper
- Reduce fertilizer and pesticide use
- Dispose of trash and chemicals properly
- Direct downspout water to grass and plants



*Your Watershed Address*

Blacks Run - Cooks Creek  
North River  
Shenandoah River  
Potomac River  
Chesapeake Bay

Map Copyright 2005 Kai Degner

## Programs and Activities Affecting Blacks Run

### ◦ TMDL: Total Maximum Daily Load ◦

Federal and state program that determined Blacks Run to be in violation of water quality standards and requires plan to correct impairments.

[www.dcr.state.va.us](http://www.dcr.state.va.us) or [www.deq.state.va.us](http://www.deq.state.va.us)

### ◦ VPDES: Virginia Pollutant Discharge Elimination System ◦

Under the Clean Water Act: the city works to promote awareness of storm water impacts and to eliminate illegal polluting in local streams and rivers.

[www2.ci.harrisonburg.va.us/index.pl/public\\_works](http://www2.ci.harrisonburg.va.us/index.pl/public_works)

### ◦ Erosion and Sediment Control Program ◦

A local program that enforces state regulations for control of erosion and sediment during and after construction. Program also addresses control of post-construction runoff.

[www.dcr.state.va.us](http://www.dcr.state.va.us)

### ◦ City of Harrisonburg ◦

Voluntary curbside recycling, electronics recycling collection, and household hazardous waste collection.

540.434.5928

[www2.ci.harrisonburg.va.us/index.pl/public\\_works](http://www2.ci.harrisonburg.va.us/index.pl/public_works)

### ◦ Stream Health Coordinator ◦

City of Harrisonburg - Parks and Recreation

540.437.1258

[www.blacksrungreenway.org](http://www.blacksrungreenway.org)

### ◦ Friends of Blacks Run Greenway ◦

540.437.0050

[www.blacksrungreenway.org](http://www.blacksrungreenway.org)

### ◦ Other information ◦

[www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)

[www.dof.virginia.gov](http://www.dof.virginia.gov)

[www.vaswcd.org](http://www.vaswcd.org)

[www.cwp.org](http://www.cwp.org)

[www.chesapeakebay.net](http://www.chesapeakebay.net)

# Blacks Run



## The Future is in Our Hands

Blacks Run is at the very root of Harrisonburg. It was the abundance of clean water offered by Blacks Run and its springs that drew Thomas Harrison to settle here so many years ago.

Once considered a life source, Blacks Run is now unhealthy in two ways: the stream's health is impaired, and it is unsafe for humans.

Read on to learn more about YOUR stream. Find out what makes a stream healthy, how Blacks Run measures up, and the things you can do to restore it to one of Harrisonburg's greatest natural resources and historical assets.



## A healthy stream has... *Life*

It supports a diverse community of living creatures, from bottom dwelling macro-invertebrate insects (benthic life) to fish and other animals. These water insects are a natural indicator of a stream's ability to support life; they are at the beginning of the food chain and may be absent in a polluted stream.

**Blacks Run does NOT support a healthy diversity of life.** The majority of insects found in our stream are tolerant of pollution. The "good guys" (like dragonfly larva) cannot live in this environment; largely because too much sediment (soil/dirt that clouds the water and eventually deposits on the bottom of the stream) covers the rocks they call home. Without these insects, fish and other animals cannot thrive.

**Things to do: Plant native streamside plants.** This attracts native insects (the adult "good guys") to live and breed. Plants also improve in-stream habitat by cooling water temperature, providing leafy food debris, holding soil in place, and filtering pollutants before they reach the stream.

## A healthy stream has... *Clear water*

You should be able to see the bottom of the stream. Water should carry limited amounts of sediment.

### **Blacks Run is NOT clear enough.**

Science has shown that too much sediment is jeopardizing the health of Blacks Run. Sediment can come from the land or the stream itself. It is carried from the land (dirty streets, bare spots in yards, and construction areas) during rainstorms. Sediment comes from the stream when fast moving water wears away at (erodes) the stream banks and bottom.

**Things to do: Manage your rainwater and don't let soil get away from you!** Eliminate bare spots and increase plantings in your yard (plants hold soil in place and reduce the volume and velocity of storm water that leaves your property). Explore water retention and infiltration tools such as rain barrels and rain gardens.



## A healthy stream has... *Clean and safe water*

A healthy stream has a natural balance of sediment, bacteria, and nutrients.

**Blacks Run does NOT have clean, safe water.** The abundance of trash, gravel, and sediment is obvious to the naked eye, but it is what we can't see that is actually the most hazardous! Blacks Run contains harmful bacteria in excess of federal standards and **no longer meets the minimum requirements for safe recreational use.** Some tests have shown high levels of Nitrogen and Phosphorous (nutrients found in fertilizers). Oil and gas also upset its natural balance.

**Things to do: Realize that almost anything can be carried to the stream by storm water** (either directly, or through storm gutters, drains, and pipes). Reduce potential pollutants: be a pet pooper-scooper (their waste IS part of the problem!), fertilize wisely, and properly maintain your car to prevent gas and oil leaks. Plant more native trees and vegetation to filter pollution and excess nutrients.

## A healthy stream has... *Room to spread out during high water*

Gradually sloped and planted stream banks and an available floodplain allow a flooding stream room to spread out and slow down. Water can then be absorbed and filtered into the ground.

**Blacks Run does NOT have the ideal room to spread during high water.** Portions of its banks are steep and bare, and its floodplain is widely built upon. This is common in a city environment, but it encourages storm water to speed up and can increase downstream flooding impacts.

**Things to do: Reduce the amount and speed of water that reaches the stream.** Slow and filter storm water by allowing it to run over native plantings in your yard. Incorporate rain barrels and rain gardens into your landscape. Vegetate drainage and streamside areas. Recognize the benefits and accept "un-manicured" streamside areas. Support stream naturalization efforts.

## A healthy stream has... *A caring community*

It has a caring community that views its stream as an asset, values its health, and acts in ways that promote positive change.

**Blacks Run IS fortunate to have a large portion of our community that recognizes the potential of this natural resource,** a City that supports it, and a local non-profit group to help care for it.

**Things to do: Learn more about local programs and ways to get involved** (see back panel for more information). Conduct your daily activities in ways that work towards creating a healthy watershed and stream.

*Keep it  
clean and  
green!*

*Take Home  
p o i n t s*

- Explore ways to reduce volume and velocity of storm water
- Reduce pollutants  
(trash, sediment, animal waste, excess nutrients, oil and gas)
- Increase native plantings